

Police Accused Of Persecution In Drug Drive

Graft Accusations Coupled With Alleged Hounding of Victims To Be Heard by Legislative Committee

Cruelty Charges Made Inquiry Is Planned Into Clubbing Cases; Hirschfeld Has New Probe On

The Health Department's connection with the present system of handling drug addicts, and the powerful role played by the Police Department in the alleged hounding of victims, resulting in the recent death of one and intense suffering to countless others, will be taken up by the legislative committee investigating the Hirschfeld-Tammany administration soon after the public hearings are begun next Tuesday.

The announcement was made yesterday by Senator Schuyler M. Meyer, chairman of the committee, following the arrest of Horace M. S. Matheson, a policeman, of the West Forty-seventh Street station, for the alleged attempted extortion of \$600 from a drug addict.

Drug Evil To Be Reviewed

"We shall go to the whole question of the drug evil and how it is being dealt with particularly by the health and police departments," said Senator Meyer. "We have seen what is happening as the result of the strong-arm methods of the police. One person has died and hundreds of others have suffered untold miseries. In the circumstances the present system certainly does not appear to be satisfactory to anybody."

"There is no doubt that the system leaves the gates open to unlimited graft and oppression and the Matheson case, if found to be correct, is only an illustration of what might occur on a large scale if the subject is not given attention."

Senator Meyer said that Joseph C. Caletto, the registered drug addict from whom Matheson is alleged to have taken \$600, came to his home last night and asked the Senator for two of the committee's investigators as witnesses when the money was to be paid. He said that the Senator had referred Caletto to the District Attorney's office, telling the victim he would not take part in any such proceeding.

Copeland Suggested Statute The present method of handling addiction, explained Senator Meyer, was put into effect about a week ago, when, at the suggestion of Dr. Royal S. Copeland, Commissioner of Health, an amendment to the Sanitary Code was adopted, making the use of habit-forming drugs by addicts an offense against the law.

Under the regulation the police were empowered to make arrests, the offenders being sent to Blackwell's Island for about nine months, or, if they surrendered themselves voluntarily, were given forty days' treatment at River-Side Hospital.

It is the contention of the committee's informants that the system has the effect of driving many citizens out of town or into sanatoriums controlled by a ring, in fact, of continuing the present scheme. Under the previously recognized theory, addiction was regarded as a disease rather than a criminal matter, and private physicians were allowed a certain latitude in the treatment of patients.

The committee is continuing its investigation of other Police Department matters, particularly that phase involving policemen under charges similar to those lodged against Charles F. Tighe. First Assistant District Attorney Morris J. Panger and Thomas J. Rowlinson.

Hirschfeld Threatens Attack Commissioner of Accounts Hirschfeld promised that the Meyer committee will not claim all the spotlight when it begins its hearings next week. He asserted yesterday that many subpoenaed persons have already been subpoenaed in connection with his personal investigation of all bills introduced in the last session of the Legislature by members of the Meyer committee. He said that these hearings, if he could get the witnesses in time, would begin today.

Commenting on Senator Meyer's statement that the committee had spent \$50,000 of its \$100,000 appropriation, Commissioner Hirschfeld said: "I don't think the Senator Brown will submit a bill for \$50,000 as counsel to the legislative committee. I'll bet Leonard M. Wallstein and Sam Berger will ask for \$30,000 or \$40,000. Berger is the law partner of 'Silver Service' Lusk and as the latter, as majority leader, has to pass on the payment of the bill, he will be sure to get it. The lawyer's fees alone will probably amount to between \$100,000 and \$150,000."

Rich Italian Arraigned As Drug Syndicate Leader

Reputed Millionaire Denies He Knew of \$60,000 in Cocaine in Olive Oil Casks

Vittorio Sorrentino, a leading member of the Naples, Italy, bar and reputed to be a millionaire, was arraigned yesterday before United States Commissioner Michael J. McGoldrick, charged with smuggling drugs.

According to Carleton Simon, special Deputy Police Commissioner, Sorrentino is one of the leaders of a drug importing ring. When he first reached this country he was placed under the surveillance of Michael J. Collins, of the customs service.

On July 5, it is charged, Sorrentino attempted to bring into this country a supply of cocaine valued at \$60,000. According to the custom officer this was secreted in twelve barrels of olive oil which Sorrentino imported from Naples.

When arraigned the attorney denied the charges of smuggling drugs. He said that the barrels were brought into this country for a friend and that he was ignorant of their contents. He was held in \$15,000 bond for further examination on August 16.

Customs and narcotics officials say that they have evidence that Sorrentino is one of the directing heads in a syndicate formed in Italy to smuggle drugs into this country. They declare that this syndicate has been operating for more than a year, and that Sorrentino's arrest was an important step in the campaign to reduce the supply of cocaine and morphine sold illegally in this country.

Tighe in Fifth Clubber Case; Gunson Faces Jury at Last

Detective Accused of Brutality To Be Arraigned To-day as Brother Officer Is Put on Trial, as Graftier; Addict Lays Extortion to Policeman

Acting District Attorney Joab Banton yesterday arranged for the prosecution in the criminal branch of the Special Sessions of Detective Sergeant Charles F. Tighe, who has five charges of assault against him. Tighe will be arraigned in the West Side Court this morning. The long-delayed trial of John J. Gunson, also a member of the Police Department, will get under way to-day. He is charged with bribery and extortion.

Patrolman Horace M. S. Matheson, of the West Forty-seventh Street station, was arrested yesterday on a charge of extortion by Detectives Albert Thomas and John Cuniff, of the District Attorney's staff. He also probably will be arraigned to-day. He was locked up last night at the West Forty-seventh Street station, and bail was fixed by Magistrate Batting in Men's Night Court at \$10,000. The indictment was refused to accept as a \$15,000 deed to property at 363 West Forty-ninth Street, which was offered by a woman who said she was a "friend of the family."

The five charges against Tighe grow out of his alleged manhandling and blackjacking of more than a score of men, women and children last Thursday in front of a former saloon conducted by Patrick Coen at 600 Ninth Avenue.

Tighe will be arraigned in West Side Court before Magistrate Simpson on the fifth charge growing out of his attacks at the Coen place. This fifth charge is of felonious assault brought by Charles Green, a one-legged negro bootblack. Tighe is under bonds totaling \$3,500 on the four other charges and is held for trial in the criminal division of Special Sessions on the charge of assault on a woman, Helen Coen, who says Tighe took her by the throat and dragged her around the room. This charge is being pushed by the Children's Society.

Acting District Attorney Banton has assigned Frederick J. Sullivan to prosecute all cases against Tighe that come up to the Special Sessions Court and has given Sullivan, as assistant attorneys, Morris J. Panger and Thomas J. Rowlinson.

Patrolman Matheson was arrested yesterday at Eighth Avenue and Forty-eighth Street.

The complainant in the case is Joseph C. Caletto, address unknown, listed as a cured drug addict. Caletto appeared first at the Meyer investigating committee rooms and admitted his previous addiction, but insisted that his record had been clean since he took the cure. He reported that Matheson had threatened to arrest him for drug addiction unless he gave \$600 to the policeman. A written statement was taken and Caletto was sent with the statement to Acting District Attorney Banton.

Mr. Banton said yesterday that the statement proved to be a rambling, and that as Caletto seemed vague but as his demeanor was so repentant and sincere, he decided to investigate. Caletto, at the direction of the detective, is said to have an appointment with Matheson, and said he would bring the money with him. Caletto was given \$80 in marked bills by the detective, who followed him. They went to the meeting and saw that Matheson accept the alleged bribe. They immediately placed the policeman under arrest. His suspension from the Police Department followed automatically. Matheson was locked up in the West Forty-seventh Street station.

The jury for the trial of Gunson, formerly a plainclothes man on Inspector Henry's vice squad, was chosen yesterday and testimony will be taken to-day.

Gunson was indicted by the March, 1920, Grand Jury on charges of bribery and extortion. Rebecca Meloyado, also known as "Chong Brown" and "Howard," was the complainant against the former detective and the indictment alleges that on October 15, 1917, he entered into an agreement with her whereby she could operate in the district where he was assigned. In return, the indictment alleges, Gunson was to receive part of "Billie's" earnings, and it is charged that he received \$50.

Although Gunson's case has been on the calendar no less than forty-three times, Assistant District Attorney Gunson has sought another postponement yesterday. Judge Rosalsky became impatient at this request and refused to grant it, stating that he would dismiss the indictment if the case was not tried.

She had been one of the ones to win a free lot. The salesman would then ask, according to the witness, that \$49 be paid "for necessary legal expenses" and that the customer then would be invited to view the property. These excursions were held every Sunday and attended by many persons who had been "blackballed" by having purpose of this, Goodman said, was to induce those who had "won" free lots to purchase other and more desirable property.

Goodman declared that the free lots, in his opinion, were not worth more than \$49, and that the purchasers often were deceived as to the location. He testified that the commissions of agents were from 25 to 40 per cent of the purchase price and that his own earnings were \$250 a week and more during the time he worked for the company.

When one of the "winners" paid the \$49 for the alleged legal expenses, \$25 of the amount went into the salesman's pocket and the balance was turned over to Meister, said Goodman.

Mr. Waugh said at the conclusion of the hearing that the disclosures warranted the preparation of legislation prohibiting canvassers from making house to house solicitations without licenses. Magistrate Mancuso said he favored a city ordinance prohibiting free lance canvassers.

The magistrate said that in justice to the International Mill and Lumber Company of Bay City, Mich., builders of the Stirling homes, he would make it clear that the lumber company was in no way connected with the Stirling Home Builders.

Boston Bank Run Ended BOSTON, Aug. 2.—More than \$2,000,000 was withdrawn by depositors from the Boston City Bank yesterday during a run which began last Friday and which appeared to have ended to-day, according to Joseph C. Holmes, treasurer of the institution.

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